

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 05013 311228Z
ACTION IO-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EGEN, UN, IN
SUBJECT: UN OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

REF: STATE 77068

1. ACCORDING TO MEA DIRECTOR GHOSH, THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT ALSO WISHES TO USE THE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE FOR HIGH LEVEL POLICY DISCUSSION OF MAJOR NORTH/SOUTH ISSUES. THE GOVERNMENT HAS SET UP AN INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE AT THE JOINT SECRETARY LEVEL TO DEVELOP GOI POSITIONS FOR OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETINGS. ALTHOUGH THE INDIAN DELEGATION HAS NOT YET BEEN FORMALLY NAMED, CURRENT PLANNING IS TO SEND MEA SECRETARY (ECONOMIC AFFAIRS) V.K. AHUJA AND MINFINANCE SENIOR ECONOMIC ADVISER R.M. HONAVAR TO NEW YORK FOR MAY MEETING, WITH INDIAN PERMANENT MISSION PROVIDING REST OF DELEGATION. GHOSH SAID THAT DELEGATION WOULD BE EVEN MORE HIGH-POWERED--WITH INCLUSION OF SENIOR MINCOMMERCE OFFICIAL AND OTHER MEA OFFICERS--VUT OVERVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING COINCIDES WITH MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS OF NON-ALIGNED COORDINATING COMMITTEE IN KABUL AND GOI'S PERSONNEL RESOURCES WILL BE SPLIT.

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2. GHOSH RECALLED THAT UNDER SECRETARY COOPER HAD JUST MET WITH AHUJA IN GENEVA DURING UNCTAD DEBT MEETING. WHILE WELCOMING THE PROSPECT FOR DISCUSSIONS ON TOPICS OUTSIDE THE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE AGENDA, SHE MADE A POINT OF NOTING THAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMON FUND FALLS TO JOINT SECRETARY SHUKLA IN MINCOMMERCE; AHUJA WOULD BE

HAPPY TO DISCUSS COMMON FUND (AND BY EXTENSION OTHER ELEMENTS OF UNCTAD COMMODITY PROGRAM), SHE SAID, BUT ONLY IN GENERAL TERMS.

3. GHOSH'S ONLY SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION OF THE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE CONCERNED THE AGENDA FOR THE MAY AND JUNE MEETINGS. SHE SAID THE GOI HAD STRONGLY WISHED THAT INTERNATIONAL TRADE BE AT THE TOP OF THE LIST SINCE THIS WAS ITS PRIMARY CONCERN IN THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AREA. FROM THE INDIAN POINT OF VIEW, ITS INTERESTS WERE VITALLY AT PLAY IN THE MTN, THE COMMON FUND NEGOTIATIONS AND MOUNTING PROTECTIONISM IN THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. THUS THE SELECTION OF RESOURCE TRANSFER, AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRIALIZATION HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTING. ON THE OTHER HAND, SHE CONTINUED, IT MIGHT BE JUST AS WELL THAT THE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE NOT TAKE UP CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES SUCH AS THE MTN AND THE COMMON FUND WHILE THEY WERE UNDER ACTIVE AND DELICATE NEGOTIATION IN OTHER FORUMS.

4. GHOSH ALSO REFERRED AT LENGTH TO THE GOI'S EARLIER PREFERENCE (WHICH IS HER OWN) THAT THE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE NOT BE ESTABLISHED AND THAT ITS MANDATE RATHER BE GIVEN TO A REFORMED ECOSOC. SHE SAID THAT THE EXISTENCE OF TWO HIGH-LEVEL BODIES IN THE UN SYSTEM COVERING THE BROAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AREA OF ECONOMIC ISSUES WAS PROVING VERY DIFFICULT TO MANAGE FROM BUREAUCRATIC AND MANPOWER RESOURCE POINTS OF VIEW. SHE WONDERED HOPEFULLY WHETHER AT THE UNGA SPECIAL SESSION IN 1980 REAL REFORM OF ECOSOC TO THIS END MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE, IF THE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE PROVED TO SERVE A USEFUL FUNCTION.

5. COMMENT: HONAVAR IS MINFINANCE SECRETARY MANMOHAN SINGH'S SENIOR DEPUTY AND HAS EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AFTER TOURS OF DUTY IN WASHINGTON AND LONDON. IF HIS PRESSING DUTIES IN NEW DELHI DO NOT PREVENT HIM FROM GOING TO NEW YORK THE UNDER SECRETARY AND OTHERS IN THE US DELEGATION WILL FIND HIM AN EXCELLENT CONTACT.
GOHEEN

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NNN

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